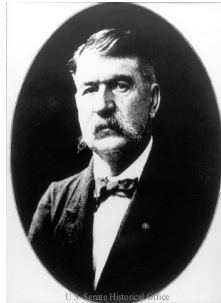


Senate Statistics

Sergeants at Arms

Edward K. Valentine (1890-1893)



Early in March 1891, a six-car funeral train bearing the remains of California Senator George Hearst pulled slowly out of a Washington, D.C. railroad station. Painted a brilliant red for the special week-long trip to San Francisco, it included two Pullman sleeping cars, two baggage cars, a dining car, and a luxurious private coach. California's other senator, Leland Stanford, had made his coach available for the use of Hearst's widow, Phoebe, and his son, William Randolph. The train also carried eight U.S. senators — including Stanford — and eight representatives. Directing the expedition was Senate Sergeant at Arms Edward Valentine.

As the Senate official responsible for arranging funerals for senators who died in office, Sergeant at Arms Valentine had his hands full. On February 24, a Maryland senator had died unexpectedly. Then, four days later, came the death of Hearst, a fabulously wealthy mining tycoon and rancher. Of the six senatorial funerals that Valentine organized during his three years in office, George Hearst's was, by all accounts, the most memorable.

The somber train trip to San Francisco passed without incident; the return journey to Washington, however, sparked controversy and calls to severely limit government spending for congressional funerals.

When the train left the West Coast, it carried cases of wine donated by California growers eager to please congressional palates. Word of this ample liquid cargo quickly reached temperance crusaders, who hired a train of their own and caught up with the Hearst train outside El Paso, Texas. One temperance observer reported on looking in at the mourners. "They were opening bottles every minute night and day, and at many stopping places [they] invited people into the baggage car to drink." At one point, when the baggage car derailed, she reported, "We could see tier after tier of wine boxes stacked up." She passed on a rumor that the train crew had forgotten to stock adequate supplies of drinking water for the trip, so passengers quenched their thirsts by drinking orange wine. Sergeant at Arms Valentine, she explained, "watched the proceedings, but dared not say anything."

When the Hearst train reached Washington on March 27, its distinguished passengers emerged with angry comments about the bad press they had received. They assured reporters that there was plenty of water on board, but that water "wasn't a popular beverage with a party of mourners." Valentine estimated that the entire trip had cost less than \$20,000 — a reasonable expense for such a large party and long journey.

Edward K. Valentine was born on June 1, 1843, in Keosauqua, Iowa. After completing his public school education there, he learned the printer's trade and moved to central Illinois to work as a typesetter for the Peoria Transcript. In 1861, at the outbreak of the Civil War, the seventeen-year-old Valentine enlisted for a ninety-day tour with the Sixty-Seventh Illinois Infantry. He quickly won a commission as a second lieutenant. At the end of that service, he returned to his home state and enlisted for further service — this time with the Seventh Iowa Cavalry. He again won an officer's commission and served under General Ulysses Grant in the Mississippi River campaigns of 1862 and 1863. At the war's conclusion, he remained in the army and headed west to fight Indians.

In June 1866, he left the army and settled in Omaha, Nebraska, to study law. By 1869, he had opened a law practice and secured an appointment as register for the U. S. land office in West Point, Nebraska. Active in Republican party politics, Valentine was elected to a local judgeship in 1875. Three years later, he successfully ran for Nebraska's single seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. He won reelection in 1880 and again in 1882. When the Republicans took control of the House in 1881, he became chairman of the influential Committee on Agriculture. He held that post for two years until the Democrats regained their majority. Valentine declined to run for a fourth term and resumed his Nebraska law practice in March 1885.

In June 1890, Charles Manderson, Nebraska's senior U.S. senator, asked Valentine if he would like to become the Senate's sergeant at arms. A bitter fight had broken out among Senate Republicans over the selection of a successor to William Canady, who had resigned. Pennsylvania Senator Matthew ("Boss") Quay lobbied his colleagues to elect a former Pennsylvania state treasurer, whom *The New York Times* referred to as Boss Quay's "henchman." According to the *Times*, Quay's approach was "altogether too brusque and too dictatorial to suit a good many of the Senators, and the other persons who had longing eyes upon the office soon learned that it was worth while to run against Quay's candidate." At this point, senators from western states made an agreement that if any one of their candidates demonstrated particular strength, they would all vote for that man. Nebraska's senators wanted former House member Valentine for the post and they summoned him to Washington so that their colleagues could look him over. They were favorably impressed.

When the Republican senators met in caucus on June 10, 1890, Matthew Quay's candidate led a crowded field with thirteen votes, but he lacked the necessary majority. On the second ballot, the western senators swung their support to Valentine, who then carried the election with twenty-three votes. Quay angrily left the meeting; the western senators went off to celebrate. Three days later, the Senate formally elected Valentine.

Edward Valentine moved to Washington and took an apartment on the current site of the Russell Senate Office Building. He easily found Senate jobs for both his sons. Kimball Valentine, the eldest, served as a clerk to the Sergeant at Arms, while Watts Valentine delivered messages between the Capitol and the nearby Maltby office building.

During his nearly three-year tenure, Valentine spent much of his time on issues related to office space. Increasing workloads caused senators to seek additional staff and more suitable quarters. Responding to these demands, the Senate acquired the Maltby apartment house in 1891. That same year, the Capitol's west front terrace opened, providing more than fifty new rooms for Senate use.

The Senate career of the fifty-year-old Valentine ended in August 1893, when the Democrats returned to the majority. He headed back to West Point, Nebraska, and resumed his law practice. In 1908, he and his wife retired to Chicago to be closer to their sons. He suffered a major stroke in 1913 and died on April 11, 1916. The following day, a Chicago newspaper carried an obituary that listed among Valentine's distinctions his role as "head of a committee which escorted the body of George F. Hearst, father of William Randolph Hearst, to California for burial."

No mention of the ride back.